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Role of Religion in Foreign Policy Decision Making

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ABSTRACT

Religion has a quantifiable role in shaping Foreign Policies and failing to acknowledge this would undermine the scope and effectivity of the discipline of IR. This study attempts to put Religion as an important factor in the decision-making process, which defines and orients a state's foreign policy. This paper aims to inspect, establish, and analyze the nature of the role of religion in foreign policy decision-making. A significant body of scholarship has questioned the exclusion of religion from the discipline of International Relations and foreign policy decision-making by traditional paradigms. This study aims to understand and address to what degree does religion affect International Relations? What does religion's role in triggering and escalating conflict signify? Therefore, this is a qualitative interpretative study that uses the methodology of discourse analysis. Content analysis of both sources was conducted to understand the meanings. It presents a framework that would lay the groundwork for policymakers and analysts to qualify and quantify the role of religion in foreign policy decision-making.

| **Keywords:** | Decision Making, Foreign Policy, International Relations, Policymakers, Religion |

Introduction

"Religion has become one of the most influential factors in world affairs in the last generation but remains one of the least examined factors in the professional study and practice of world affairs" (Shah, 2011). Religion's influence in International Relations is one of the twenty-first century's most significant, yet least understood security challenges. While some scholars have strived to study the recent rise in religion worldwide, across ideological divides, it continues to remain an unexplored domain, leaving many questions unanswered (Huntington 1993; Albright 2006; Mearsheimer and Walt 2006; Haynes 2008; Hurd 2008; Inboden 2008).

In several Muslim-majority countries, religion is seen as the basis of the legitimacy of state authorities and at times their policies, both domestic and foreign policies. Similarly, religion was always a major component in the historical development of international relations and early political systems including the Chou Dynasty, the Greek City-State, and the Muslim Caliphates and Dynasties (Shuriye, 2011). So, my argument revolves around the notion that the more religion is ignored, undermined, or misplaced in the study of world affairs, the lesser we are nearing a solution to the world's political problems. Marginalization of religion in International Relations has been troubling, encouraging more mainstream engagement with the subject. Religion has been and will continue to be the most active constituent in world affairs and marginalization of religion in the discipline can lead to better foreign policy decisions.

This study attempts to put Religion as an important factor in the decision-making process, which defines and orients a state's foreign policy. Reframing religion as a regular feature of foreign policy formulation gives policymakers a broader and more effective scope of tactical options like engaging influential religious actors and interests in any given milieu.

Religion has a quantifiable role in shaping Foreign Policies and failing to acknowledge this would undermine the scope and effectivity of the discipline of IR. Religion gives an individual a unified identity regardless of their race. Religion mostly triggers and spreads Interstate or intrastate conflicts, thus, playing an important part in foreign affairs and the decision-making process in many nation-states in the world today.

By qualifying religion's role and helping to quantify it in a given scenario, this study would help provide a broader framework for a more accurate assessment of foreign policy. It seeks to evolve foreign policy theory and practice in a world rapidly regressing towards partisanship along religious lines. This research aims to address the shortcomings of current practices of foreign policy decision making which have resulted in gross miscalculations. It seeks to address the need for inclusive decision-making that would help enhance the long-term effectiveness of foreign policy decisions. This study aims to understand and address to what degree does religion affect International Relations? What are the instruments through which this influence is practiced? What does religion's role in triggering and escalating conflict signify? Why is religion marginalized in the field of International Relations? And most importantly why and how should religion be included in the foreign policy decision-making process?

Religion and Politics

A country's religious heritage may affect its overall orientation toward foreign policy. This research explains how religion plays a role in defining a state's allies and enemies, the extent of its impact, and how it interacts with existing domestic political structures and groups. This research establishes the inevitability of religion's influence of on International Relations and Foreign policy. It argues that religion is one of the most significant factors, if not the most significant, in the domain of IR. It presents a workable model for foreign policy professionals that would help in a comprehensive mechanism to understand and measure the impact of religion at various levels of International Relations and consequently aid in the formulation of better foreign policy. It would also add sustainability of policy by acknowledging empirical identities, both individual and collective.

Anson Shupe concluded that religion was a declining force in the world that would eventually disappear. The influence practiced by these scholars laid the foundation for the libertarian movement that excluded religion from the foreign policy paradigm. Thus, the separation of State and the church (Norris & Inglehart, 2011). Religion gets highlighted politically in a time of global religious revival and secularization of the world. Haynes saw that un-secularization is a powerful and strong interaction between religion and politics, and this interaction is mobilized by two factors; (1) the globalization process; (2) the revolution of communications (Haynes, 2009). Religious transnationalism as a concept refers to the case where religious ideas exceed and give limited respect to states' boundaries, and give power to transnational actors which play an important role in contemporary international relations (Ginty, 2013).

Apart from the collective impact, the consequences of this at an individual level were also counterproductive. Dismissing religion created an identity crisis with confusion that was easily exploitable by religious movements (Thomas, 2005). A deeper investigation of the religion-driven uprisings in Algeria, Myanmar, Yugoslavia, and Indian-Occupied Kashmir was more a function of regional and international factors rather than local ones. Such forced approaches also gave more power to religious lea like the Pope and Dalai Lama and provide their ideologies and actions legitimacy in the eyes of the masses. Religion influences international politics in diverse ways.

Foreign Policy: Religion and Decision-Making Process

Foreign Policy is a set of guiding principles that outline the formal course of action of a state concerning its relations with other states in military, trade, societal, cultural, and

humanitarian domains. This also extends to the domain of non-state actors that exist beyond the sovereign boundaries of the incumbent state. These policies can be drafted through varying processes by different figures or bodies of authority. It is of immense importance vis-à-vis any state's International Relations. The absence of a well-developed foreign policy may jeopardize a country's global standing and stance which would adversely impact its ability to achieve its national goals visa-versa.

Other agents that affect foreign policy include the size of the country; the state of its socioeconomics and societal structures; the nature of its political structure and institutionalization; military power, and government narrative. Domestic public opinion, perception of political structures, mechanism of decision-making, and personal characteristics of the political top brass are also extremely important variables that impact the process and product of foreign policy decision-making. Frankel believes that this internal environment, its requirements, weaknesses and strengths, and its prime concerns significantly impact a country's foreign policy (Frankel, 1963). This reflects that the foreign policy of a state is perceived to be influenced by its historical existence; geographical positioning and topography; state of social and economic stability; and cultural values that interact with the changing international political landscape and formulate foreign policy.

The official purpose of the foreign policy of a state is to achieve certain national objectives. Foreign policies with a broader spectrum and the ability to adjust to the changing outlook of global politics tend to be more successful in achieving their goals, as opposed to those that take rigid positions. The countries where religion majorly impacts foreign policy are less in number but are highly significant in world politics. There can be two important ways that religion can influence foreign policy. The first can be defined by how a state frames its policies to manage internal religious elements relevant to a particular foreign policy decision in the global context, before putting it to effect in the international domain. The second can be characterized as the actions of internal religious elements looking to impact a country's foreign policy decisions. However, there is no formal mechanism to describe the space set, time set, and conditions under which religion decisively influences foreign policy (Haynes, 2008; Snyder, 2011; Fitzgerald, 2011; Muzaffar, Khan, & Karamat, 2017).

Religion's impact on state affairs is one of the major challenges of this era, yet it happens to be the least understood security issue in the field of International Relations and foreign policy. Barton, Hayden, and von Hippel conclude, "most government officials and implementing partners still do not have the requisite tools or necessary understanding of the issues to factor religion into policy and practice in an appropriate manner". The role of religion in foreign policy remains a controversial topic for scholars (mostly because of the secular origins/premise of traditional IR theory). While its limited involvement in IR analysis has existed for a while, a decisive role of religion in foreign policy is a relatively unexplored domain (Huntington 1993; Albright 2006; Mearsheimer & Walt 2006; Haynes 2008; Hurd 2008; Inboden 2008).

Peter Berger warns that any current affairs analysis that ignores religion would be at a great disadvantage (Berger,2003). Madeleine Albright also admitted that she had to reevaluate her approach as a foreign policy professional in light of the emerging novel realities that were previously ignored (Albright,2007). However, despite all this, the role of religion remains a disputed and therefore less investigated field of IR. Its significance in every domain of the level of analysis of foreign policy is undeniable which makes a strong case for not just its inclusion as a determinant, but its visible entrenchment in virtually all other determinants.

Literature Review

According to John Esposito religion was privatized, "Neither development theory nor international relations considered religion a significant variable for political analysis" (Esposito, 2002). Peter Katzenstein writes, "Because they are expressions of rationalist

thought deeply antithetical to religion, the silence of realist and liberal theories of international relations on the role of religion in European and world politics is thus not surprising" (Katzenstein, 2006). Jeffrey Haynes accurately examines relationships between religion and international relations, mainly focusing on several world religions - Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism. He evaluates how this complex relationship has evolved over the last four decades, looking at a multiplicity of political contexts, regions, and countries. He has investigated core concerns and areas such as religion, foreign policy, terrorism, international security, transnational actors, and foreign policy of --Nation States (Haynes, 2008).

Elizabeth Shackman Hurd discusses how US-led foreign policy distinguishes between bad and good religion, where the former is associated with intolerance and extremism and the latter with compassion and harmony. Hurd charts new territory in the study of religion in global politics and indicates how labeling a conflict "religious" or "sectarian" is to take sides in that conflict. Hurd clarifies this through several examples, including the Syrian conflict where reductive justifications about religious violence support the Assad regime playing Syrian minority groups against each other (Hurd, 2015). The major difference between the various diverse societies is based on political and economic ideologies. Huntington came up with a novel hypothesis that in the future new conflicts will occur based on cultural and ideological differences. Post 9/11 Huntington's thesis proved right; the world gradually became divisive in the name of religion (Huntington, 1996).

Madeleine Albright examines the profound impact of religion on America's opinion of itself, the effect on U.S. foreign policy with the rise of the Christian right, the Bush administration's successes and failures in responding to 9/11, the challenges posed by the war in Iraq, and the importance of understanding Islam. She offers a balanced, thought-provoking, thorough analysis of U.S. strategy and condemns those of other faiths who abuse religious zeal to create divisions or enrich their power (Albright, 2006). Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler's book argue that while religion is not the driving force in world politics, international relations cannot be understood without taking religion into account, and its impact should not be underestimated. Religious legitimacy influences policymakers and their constituents; local religious phenomena, especially religious conflicts, cross borders; many transnational issues like human rights and population control have religious components (Fox and Sandler, 2004). Scott Thomas argues that a major paradigm shift in international relations theory is needed to explain the global resurgence of religion and its effects on key concepts and theories (Thomas, 2005).

William Inboden argues that American foreign policy establishment is secular in nature, and this restricts their consequential analysis. He makes his case concerning several categories of analysis, comprising, public diplomacy, conflict and reconciliation, economic development, governance and democratization, and religious freedom. Foreign policymakers should take the research seriously; he argues that they would discover priceless assets for their effort (Inboden, 2008). Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart predicted that religion would gradually fade as enlightenment took over in every aspect of human life. The belief that religion was dying because of the industrial revolution became the conventional wisdom in the social sciences during most of the twentieth century. The traditional secularization thesis needs an overhaul; however, religion has not disappeared and is unlikely to do so. It is to become more relevant and a force to reckon with. Nevertheless, the concept of secularization captures an important part of what is going on. This confirms that religiosity persists most strongly among vulnerable populations, especially in poorer nations and in failed states. Conversely, a systematic erosion of religious practices (Norris & Inglehart, 2004).

Olivier Roy explains by describing the multiplicity of different forms of Muslim behavior and aimed to show there is no single Islam just as there is no single Christianity so it's a little unfair to generalize. He argued that Islamist movements were running out of

revolutionary steam (Roy, 2017). He provides a brilliant insight into radicalizing of Islam over time. John Mearsheimer and Stephan Walt describe the significant level of material and diplomatic support that the United States provides to Israel and argue that this support cannot be fully explained on either strategic or moral grounds. This exceptional relationship is due mainly to the political influence of a loose coalition of individuals and organizations that actively work to shape U.S. foreign policy in a pro-Israel direction. (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007).

Frameworks

This shift in international policy towards religion is a complicated multifaceted phenomenon. Religious figures of authority have come a long way from being vilified and excluded altogether from IR analysis to being awarded a seat at the IR negotiating table

Secularization Theory

Secularism is the ideology that excludes any involvement or consideration of any divine powers in state affairs. Professor Donald Eugene Smith stated that when it comes to political development studies, secularization theory was structurally by far the most fundamental and ideological shift (Smith, 1970: 6). Secularism became the symbolism for the implied notion of modernity, public authority, tolerance, and rationality as opposed to the perceived irrationality of religion. Religion was regarded as the exact opposite of all these 'prized' values and therefore relegated from the IR domain. (Hurd, 2008).

Spanish sociologist José Casanova also testified to the overwhelming dominance of the secularization theory as the governing paradigm in the world of social sciences in the nineteenth and twentieth century (Casanova, 1994). However, this belief by the dominant IR theorists of that time that religion was on its way out of the public domain, was disproved after religion made a major comeback in several countries in developing in particular and across the globe in general, including the US.

IR Theory and Religion

Daniel Philpott attributes the absence of religion in the foundational literature of IR, realism, and Liberalism to the personal interaction of the founders of these theories, with religion. He argues that Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, and Kant devised their theories during an era in the west defined by the rejection of religion and the rise of secularization theory which was embedded into their theories (Philpott, 2001). Timothy Samuel Shah argues that religion gave form to the international system with its focus on normativity. He explains how in certain cases, religion formed the framework of sovereign states and defined the code of humanitarianism and its obligations in a conflict. In the same way, he sees religion as a major player in the rise and fall of societies and even the origin of the systems of the UN (Shah, 2011).

Monica Duffy Toft also points out the inability of traditional theory and its models to explain the vast history of most of the world that was shaped by religion, which is problematic for those seeking to understand these eras and their dynamics (Toft, 2010). International politics today is pivoted around religious-linked concerns. When it comes to major causes that shape foreign policy decisions, structural realism highlights the division of power; structural constructivism stresses the importance of cultural practices and their design.

Realism

The fundamentals that define realism are:

- Accumulation of power, material goods, and resources are prime objectives of the state's foreign policies.

- Transnational goals of all states are alike international because of a common purpose, which justifies the covertness of the state policy formulating processes. But because of its inability to incorporate certain very obvious armed actors, Realism failed to foresee major global political paradigm changes.

Realism views these transnational organizations as avenues of collaboration, conflict, or contest between states. This school of thought also puts the onus of maintaining global order on more dominant world powers such as the US to give form to the international system that structures the global political order. Mainstream realist IR theory holds that because of the anarchic nature of international relations, in which there is no sovereign power that exercises authority over all others.

Liberalism

Liberalism does not acknowledge the state as the only primary actor in global politics. It allocates equal significance to transnational organizations including non-state actors like international organizations and religious groups that are independent of any particular country, like Al Qaeda (Haynes, 2001b, 2005b). It envisages a global system as a collective of different areas of common interests where national and international processes converge, like human rights, ecology, democracy, trade and finance, and energy. Liberalism states that order in these processes is not maintained through an absolute balance of power like Realism dictates, but through consensus built through negotiations, bargaining, acknowledgment of shared values, and international law. Liberalism rules that the order of this interdependence is governed by the shared interest of states. However, this transnational approach of liberalism does not extend as a general model but restricts itself to certain issues which include democracy and development.

Liberalism agrees that identities and interests can be a product of ideas. Liberalism also believes that transnational functions are influenced by national policies which originate from domestic political considerations defined by the identities that stem from domestic settings and values which shape state preferences and foreign policy (Moravcsik 2003:168). Religion's role in defining these identities and values can be investigated by understanding how it guides and pursues its followers to lead a moral life as defined by religious doctrines (Laitin 1986:25).

Religious-Centered IR Approaches

Two theories assign religion such pivotal importance to religion that they argue that all existing IR paradigms that dismiss religion should be replaced by ones that place religion at the core of the global political analysis.

Samuel Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations

Huntington's advocacy for an overwhelming central role of religion in International Relations is a view not shared by many of his counterparts including Snyder who is an avid advocate for the inclusion of religion in foreign policy analysis. They also agree that the previously popular secularism-driven theories of IR have failed to explain and address modern-day international relations.

The transforming international landscape urged IR theorists to consider the role of religion in International Relations more seriously. Samuel Huntington categorized conflicts in various parts of the world in the context of a transnational clash between Islam and the 'West', comprising countries of Northern America and Western Europe. He predicted a widespread escalation of this conflict. While the authenticity and legitimacy of this claim re disputed, it forced the IR scholarship to consider the role of religion in IR which was completely dismissed by the Secularization theory and the Westphalian school of thought. Huntington's hypothesis provided a platform to understand the expanding interest of the

proverbial 'West' in Middle Eastmain after 9/11 especially Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan. This, in a way, endorsed Huntington's hypothesis. The socio-scientific secularist approach dismissed religion terming it too irrational and unreasonable to be taken seriously.

Kubálková's 'International Political Theology'

Vendulka Kubálková's International Political Theology (IPT) approach connects the dynamics of the political and economic domains while explaining the reasons to qualify religion as a pivotal factor in global ties. Kubálková believed that religion was filling the vacuum of the growing identity void and need for meaning in a rapidly globalizing world diluting identity. She maintained that globalization has complicated the existential crisis of most humans which had led to identity crises so IPT is a response to this development (Kubalkovas, 2003: 87).

She questioned the capacity of traditional theories of IR to explain this resurgence of religion and called for a more effective paradigm to understand this scenario. She called for a deeper focus on generating a discourse that provides the answer to the increasing human need for meaning in life, regardless if they came from secular or transcendental paradigms. She identifies ontological differences between the secular and religious discourse (Kubálková, 2003: 87).

Level of Analysis in Foreign Policy Decision Making

The foreign policy decision-making process is dissected into different levels for a more comprehensive evaluation of significantly influential actors and factors Including:

1) Individual-Level Analysis

2) State-Level Analysis

3) System/Global-Level Analysis

Four Religions of Foreign Policy

It has now been established through that religion as a major factor in foreign policy would help state actors achieve their strategic interests and foreign policy objectives. This can be achieved with maximum utility by establishing a specific set of categories specially formulated to analyze the role of religion on foreign policy in all possible circumstances and conditions. The four categories approach seeks to create a new grid diagnostic system to assist decision-makers. These four categories interact at a global level uninterruptedly and are categorized as 'dynamics. They are the dynamic of collusion/combination; the dynamic of coercion; the dynamic of cooperation; and the dynamic of co-option.

The dynamic of collision is to be considered in cases where religious and secular spheres are formally differentiated while building a new political regime. This category visibly has its foundations in the Westphalian theory of separation of the state authority and religion (Casonova,2006). This has the obvious ramification of religion becoming subservient to the state and leads to a secular system. *The dynamic of coercion* is applicable when the state expels religious actors from the public domain for the perceived fear of state violence. This has a communist bent with force at its core especially with context to the developing world. Military authority, and political autocracy mostly join forces in such situations to implement secularism. In this context, religion becomes a prized identity and inspiration to fight against the oppression of the secularist forces (Thomas, 2005).

Nukhet A. Sandal, Patrick James

Territorial size, Geographical/Geostrategic position, Economic development, Cultural factors, Social Structure, Government Structure, Personalities of Leaders, and

Ideological Premise are considered as the independent variables or determinants of foreign policy.

Sandal and James (2011, p. 6) are of the view that religion should be examined as an independent variable, intervening variable and dependent variable, based on the nature of the foreign policy issue at hand. While this approach seeks to be more flexible in assigning varying importance to religion in the decision-making process, it possesses the possibility of creating ambiguity based on the predilection of the decision-makers and analysts.

Eva Bellin

Bellin (2008, pp. 339, 341–42) believes the role of religion in IR is an established reality therefore any further debate over this issue would be a wastage of scholarly time and resources, and argues that religion has been, what she calls, "under theorized" in the field of IR. She, therefore, suggests to shift focus to identify and qualify "when does religion matter and how"? She sees religion and culture as the foundation of all human actions as an individual and a society. Bellin also advocates that religion should at least be recognized as an independent variable in foreign policy analysis and expresses surprise that this approach has not been stressed more.

Carolyn M. Warner, Stephen G. Walker

Walter and Walker (2011) laid out a framework to analyze religion and foreign policy. They proposed a framework within which 'various causal pathways and mechanisms can be situated. They show how academic research on religion and politics can be used to theorize and hypothesize the relationship between religion and foreign policy and how can it be applied to measure the role of religion in foreign policy. Warner and Walker argued that religion was under-analyzed in the field of foreign policy and international relations. They came up with a mechanism to map how religion makes its way into foreign policy decision-making.

Analysis and Discussion: Amanah Mustafa's Framework

Religion quantifiably impacts the foreign policy decision-making process at virtually all levels of analysis from the individual to the global domain. Therefore, it can be argued that analyzing foreign policy in relation to religion on grounds of Level Of Analysis In Foreign Policy Decision Making first devised by David Singer (1961), would enable a comprehensive and in-depth examination of religion's impact and its possible consequences. It would help quantify the extent to which religion influences a particular foreign policy decision and qualify what degree of significance should be associated with it while taking the final policy decision through lexicographic choice.

The proposed framework would use numerical values assigned to each level of analysis, based on indicators that qualify the impact of religion in that particular domain. The numerical value would help quantifying the level of significance to be associated, from cursory to decisive.

The framework acknowledges 5 key factors of each level of analysis and assigns a value between zero (0) and one (1) to each factor based on relevance and probable significance to the policy issue. With 1 signifying cursory significance while 5 representing a decisive role with regards to foreign policy issue.

- Individual-Level Analysis

  o Personality

  o Stated and perceived ideological premise

- o   Understanding & Perception of History

- o   Ego and Ambitions

- o   Past decision-making precedents

- State-Level Analysis

  - o   Type of political system

  - o   Institutional structure

  - o   Domestic dynamics

  - o   Long-held beliefs of a nation

  - o   Leverage enjoyed by religious actors

- System/Global-Level Analysis

  - o   History of Ethno-religious conflict

  - o   Power relationships

  - o   Transnational non-state religious actors

  - o   Religious ideology concordance/ discordance

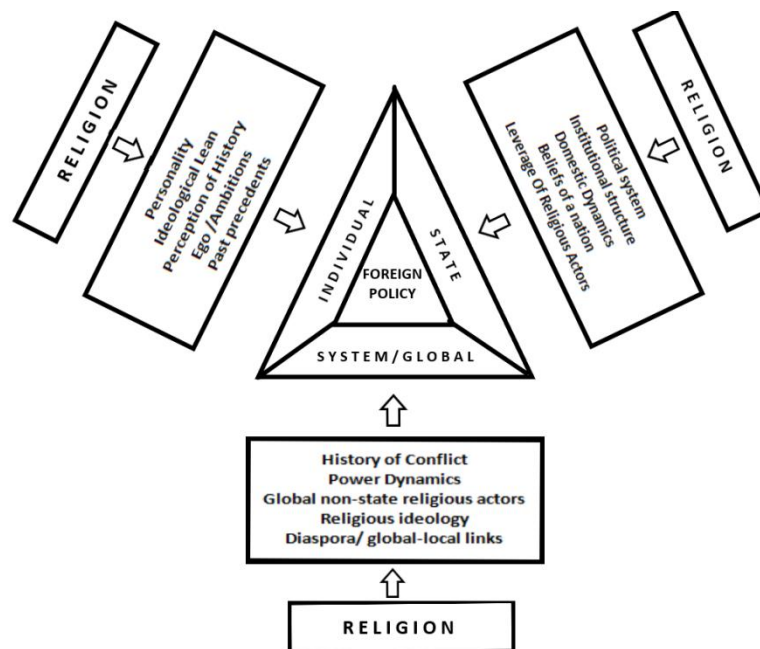 - o   Volume and Influence of Transnational Diaspora/ global-local religious links

Figure 1: Amnah's Analytical Framework

While this framework would aid in analyzing/evaluating the role of religion vis-à-vis a particular foreign policy issue/decision, it would simultaneously generate a loose profile of individuals, states and their behavioral trends in international relations, which would prove as a reference point for analysts/ policy makers. Idealistic rational decision making is rarely practiced where all alternatives are rationally, dispassionately and thoroughly evaluated on the basis of their utilities.

Studies of Cognitive psychology show that decision makers focus more on salient features, which limits their capacity to process the entire spectrum of information they have at their disposal. Therefore, there is a general tendency of prioritizing the nature of the outcome based on the most important and valuable objectives of a foreign policy decision. It is important to understand this phenomenon because it lies at the heart of understanding how Lexicographic choice, plays a vital role in framing defining priorities of an individuals and states while making a foreign policy decision. Lexicographic Choice is a method of multi-attribute decision-making by first weighing the choices at hand in relation on the most important attribute. In case the first attribute is best served by more than one alternative, it is then evaluated on the second desirable objective. This practice continues until all objectives are weighed and the best option is deduced.

The increase in religious nationalism, religion driven conflicts dominate the global landscape after proponents of secular dominance in IR theory that had assumed that religion would be wiped out from the lives of nations, countries, states and individuals. It has now been proven that not only was this hypothesis incorrect in a way that religion was not relegated from international politics, on the contrary it gained more relevance, influence and power in global affairs over time. The concept of religion was dubbed as a primitive social construct that was to be boxed in the private domain. It was in fact predicted that it would eventually fade out from private lives as well. Secularism and its ideals were seen as the foundation of the modern society and the cornerstone of the scientific revolution.

Globalization is changing, shaping, redefining, or augmenting identities. Religion has the ability of facilitating new forms of identity. Volume, position and power of Transnational Diaspora/ global-local religious links have played important roles in the international politics of ethnic conflicts and of creating soft power. This is why the framework identifies it as an important matrix that merits being studied as a key element in the global level analysis.

This framework builds on the work already done by scholars of IR regarding acknowledging the significance of religion in foreign policy formulation and analysis. It goes a step further than advocating religion's inclusion and presents a basic blueprint as to how religion could be integrated in foreign policy analysis. It does not only identify religion as a variable but also identifies other key determinants of foreign policy most likely to be influenced by religion. It however does not adopt the approach of the traditional secularization theory by completely excluding or dismissing the secular domain of IR. The framework even provides allowances for scenarios that could yield a result where religion is found not be an influence at all. This is why this approach is not only the next step in the right direction but is also free from prejudices for or against any ideological premise.

Conclusion

Major schools of thought in International Relations vis-à-vis Realism, Constructivism, and Liberalism inadvertently and more ironically informed by religion in varying degrees and dimensions, even though their fundamental literature dismisses religion completely. However, in-depth analysis of this argument shows how deeply religion is involved. Even within the bounds of the Realism theory, religion can govern if two countries indulge in conflict or not. Religious values in most cases spill over into the cultural domain and construct the sociopolitical fiber of a society. States with similar religious and/or cultural values are less likely to go to war with each other and vice versa. This influence of this congruence or divergence of religious values is not limited to conflicts, but also plays a role in building alliances with countries.

Religious Nationalism, where at one hand binds major factions of society together and is in many cases the primary identity that supersedes ethnicity. Foreign Policy decisions are preferably made purely in the light of the country's interest without bowing down to any domestic pressures. However, that is becoming increasingly difficult because of two very significant factors. The first is the almost unanimous agreement among IR scholars that the

concept of nation-states is not on its strongest footing which creates a looming sense of social volatility in the domestic arena. This presents a challenge to state administrations that have to walk on eggshells to maintain relative peace. The second factor is the growing globalization and avenues of information and communication. This virtually instantaneous flow of information and channels of imparting information about events in one state to the people who identify themselves with the victims in another state has created a global religious community. Globalization can therefore be characterized as the mechanism for the transnationalism of religion, that facilitates the interaction of state and non-state actors, both religious and secular. Conflict and direst fueled worldwide immigration, have also created multiple transnational religious populations. While there are no plausible reasons for the reversal of globalization, it is only obvious that these transnational religious populations would grow bigger and stronger adding unspeakable equity to their ability to sway foreign policies of states. This research condensed and analyzed the strongest arguments presented against and for the role of religion in foreign policy. It scrutinizes the strengths and weaknesses of these arguments and presents a thesis that seeks to address their major shortcomings without any prejudice towards Secularization or any bias against religion.

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